



**CLIMBING WALL LEADING AWARD  
SYLLABUS & GUIDANCE NOTES  
Print-friendly version**

## **Climbing Wall Leading Award Handbook**

This award is for holders of the Climbing Wall or Single Pitch Awards who wish to instruct lead climbing skills on indoor or outdoor climbing walls and structures.

### **Participation Statement**

Mountain Training recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions. Mountain Training has developed a range of training and assessment schemes and associated supporting literature to help leaders manage these risks and to enable new participants to have positive experiences while learning about their responsibilities.

### **Acknowledgements**

Many people have contributed to the preparation of this Handbook by attending Mountain Training working party meetings and by making detailed and constructive comments on the draft. Thanks are due to course providers, Board members, the Mountaineering Councils, the Association of British Climbing Walls and the National Mountain Centres for help in the production of this publication.

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# Prospectus

## Preface

Nowadays it is common to begin rock climbing on artificial climbing walls and there are many regular climbers who rarely or never venture onto natural rock. The accessibility of walls and their relative safety often mean that such facilities are ideal for all climbers and are popular places to develop skills and experience. Artificial walls can allow a high level of performance to be developed and allow climbing to take place throughout the year.

The number of individuals who climb to a high technical standard and wish to learn to lead on artificial walls has risen dramatically over the years. Mountain Training wishes to ensure that high standards of instruction are maintained so that enjoyment and safety are enhanced without compromising the sport or the participation of others. High standards are achieved through experience, personal qualities, training and validation.

Introducing climbers to leading is a serious undertaking. It involves the mechanics of safeguarding novice leaders from a fall as well as introducing them to the judgements and decision making related to leading.

This handbook provides advice to those involved in teaching the skills required to lead routes on artificial climbing walls and particularly for candidates working their way through the Climbing Wall Leading Award. It is designed to support the knowledge and experience of candidates, trainers and assessors without prescribing methods. There are many technical manuals and books which will continue to illustrate evolving skills and techniques and these notes are designed to complement such literature.

This document is divided into the following sections:

- A Prospectus that explains the way you progress through the Climbing Wall Leading Award from registration to assessment.
- A Syllabus that lists the skills required to teach / instruct others to lead routes on climbing walls.
- Guidance notes that help advise candidates of protocols and procedures, and also explain some training aims and indicate what assessors seek to ascertain.
- Appendices that provide background information.

## 1 Introduction

The Climbing Wall Leading Award has been designed to train and assess those who wish to teach lead climbing skills on indoor or outdoor artificial climbing walls and structures with fixed protection. This includes a wide range of structures (including, for example towers and mobile climbing walls) which will be referred to throughout as 'walls'. These structures are deemed to have safety equipment, such as top anchors, in place and are maintained through a management regime. The award is concerned with ensuring good practice when developing leading skills. It covers the introduction, coaching and on-going development of the technical and movement skills required to lead routes.

## 2 Scope of the Scheme

Completion of a training course, without passing the assessment, should not be considered as a qualification in itself, although it may be of benefit to the trainee.

The award includes a measure of personal competence. However, it is not a personal proficiency programme and should not be used as either an entry requirement, or a measure of suitability for climbing on artificial walls.

The award is valid throughout the UK and wherever UK qualifications are recognised.

For the purposes of the Climbing Wall Leading Award, a climbing wall is:

- An artificial structure, designed for the purpose of being used for climbing activities (this includes towers and mobile climbing walls), with fixed protection e.g. bolts
- Indoors or outdoors
- A structure which has safety equipment such as top anchors in place and is maintained through a management regime

The employer or organising authority must have appropriate management structures in place if they wish to employ Climbing Wall Leading Award holders for duties beyond the remit of the award.

The Climbing Wall Leading Award does not cover:

- the skills needed to climb and/or supervise others on natural crags and former quarries
- multi-pitch rock climbing skills
- the teaching or supervision of leading on outdoor crags
- the placing of non-fixed protection
- the use of high or low ropes courses
- the use of ice climbing walls including dry tooling
- the assessment of candidates' personal qualities

If you are in doubt about a particular venue, the appropriate people to approach for advice are qualified Mountaineering Instructor (MIA or MIC) or British Mountain Guide. The officers of Mountain Training may also be consulted.

### **3 Stages in the Scheme**

#### **Pre-registration requirements**

- You must be at least 18 years old
- You must hold either the Climbing Wall Award or the Single Pitch Award
- You must have an up to date logbook (ideally DLOG) with evidence of the following:
  - 50 led routes
  - Climbed at 3 different major climbing walls
  - Belayed a lead climber 50 times
  - 25 lead routes at grade F6a on indoor climbing walls
  - 20 supervising sessions after passing either Climbing Wall Award or Single Pitch Award

You should note that the figures given are absolute minimums and most successful candidates will have well in excess of the experience outlined.

#### **Register for the Climbing Wall Leading Award scheme**

Log in to the Candidate Management System and pay the fee to register for the Climbing Wall Leading Award scheme. Then notify Mountain Training via the SEND TO MT button in DLOG that your DLOG is ready to be reviewed

You will be notified by email by Mountain Training with the result of your application. Applications with less than the minimum experience cannot be approved.

### **Attend a training course**

Training courses are delivered by Mountain Training approved providers and will involve at least 8 hours contact time. Courses will be run with at least 2 and no more than 8 candidates. The minimum staffing ratio is 1 trainer to 4 candidates. The training course assumes competence as a climber, including experience of leading routes and belaying lead climbers, so some aspects of the course may not be covered during training: candidates are expected to make themselves aware of these elements.

At the end of the course the course director will complete a course report on the Mountain Training database and record your attendance. Once this has been completed you will have a record in the training tab of your account.

Candidates are encouraged to use the skills checklist provided <http://www.mountain-training.org/climbing/awards/climbing-wall-leading-award> to evaluate their current skills and to plan, with their trainers, their particular route towards assessment.

### **Consolidate your experience**

Candidates may see new ideas and techniques during training and will often need time to practise and evaluate these before assessment. During this period candidates are encouraged to climb at as wide a range of venues as possible, both as an individual climber and when assisting other instructors in the teaching of lead climbing. Mountain Training recommends that all but the most experienced of candidates allow a minimum of three months between training and assessment. There is currently no time limit on the validity of a training course and some candidates may take several years to complete the award.

### **Attend an assessment course**

Before you book onto a Climbing Wall Leading Award assessment, make sure you have done the following:

- You must be at least 18 years old
- You must have attended a Climbing Wall Leading Award training course (or have been granted exemption)
- You must be familiar with the syllabus
- You must have logged a minimum of 100 different lead climbs, at least half of which must be a grade of French 6a or above
- You must have assisted or observed at least 5 teaching leading sessions delivered by a suitably qualified person
- You must hold a current first aid certificate, minimum 8 hours and relevant to your work as a Climbing Wall Award or Single Pitch Award holder

Candidates should be familiar with all aspects of the syllabus before assessment, even if some parts were not covered in detail during training. Assessment courses provide at least six hours contact time between candidates and assessors and candidates are tested in accordance with the syllabus.

Following the assessment the course director will complete a course report on the Mountain Training database which will record one of three possible results:

**Pass:** awarded where the candidate has demonstrated appropriate knowledge and application of the course syllabus and the necessary experience and attributes have been demonstrated.

**Defer:** awarded where the candidate has generally performed well and has shown the necessary experience and attributes, but where complete proficiency has not been attained in certain aspects of the syllabus or where a lack of experience has been identified.

**Fail:** awarded where the candidate's performance has been generally weak, or the necessary experience and attributes have not been shown. A complete assessment course will need to be subsequently attended.

In the case of a deferral, candidates will generally return to their original assessment provider, however they can be reassessed by any appropriate provider. Practical reassessments cannot take place within three months of the initial assessment to allow sufficient time for practise and preparation. All deferral reassessments must be completed within five years.

In all cases the result will be discussed with candidates and recorded in their logbook. Candidates who are deferred or failed will receive written feedback including an action plan. This will include reasons for the result, further recommendations and details of timing and format for re-assessment. Due to the short duration of the assessment course it is possible that a candidate who deferred on one element may be required to attend a re-assessment of the full 6 hours.

Candidates are asked to raise any concerns about the assessor's decision at the time of assessment wherever possible. If, on reflection, any part of the discussion or written report do not fit your impression of the assessment/your performance then contact the provider/director for additional clarification, in writing if necessary.

#### **Continue to gain and record experience and any relevant additional training**

All Mountain Training award schemes are based on the current and relevant experience of the individual award holder.

Holders of this award may, through additional training or breadth of experience, have competencies over and above those assessed as part of this award. If award holders are to be deployed to operate beyond the strict scope of this award then the employer or organising authority should develop a strategy for managing such deployment. This management should include the involvement of a suitably experienced and qualified technical advisor who can assess the suitability of the award holder to operate on specific venues, routes or activities and testify to their competence to do so. (See Mountain Training's National Guidelines for more information on technical advisors.)

#### **4 First Aid Requirements**

Prior to taking the Climbing Wall Leading Award assessment course the candidate must hold a valid first aid qualification.

The minimum requirement for the first aid qualification is that it must involve at least one full day or eight hours of instruction and include a practical assessment. The Level 2 award in Emergency First Aid at Work is an appropriate qualification and is offered by a number of awarding organisations. It is the responsibility of award holders to maintain their first aid qualifications. As all candidates will already hold the Climbing Wall Award or Single Pitch Award they are automatically expected to have a current certificate to validate these awards.

Please note that Mountain Training does not endorse or approve first aid courses or first aid providers.

## **5 Exemption from Training**

Experienced climbers who already have substantial personal climbing experience and experience of supervising groups on climbing walls may apply to be exempted from attendance at the training course.

Applications for exemption from the training course will be considered on a case by case basis. The experience logged must be sufficiently comprehensive to justify the claim that the candidate need not attend a training course. Candidates who wish to apply for exemption from training should consider all aspects of the syllabus, preferably in discussion with someone who has been through the scheme.

There is no exemption from the assessment.

## **6 Equal Opportunities**

Mountain Training is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all participants in climbing, hill walking, and mountaineering. Candidates, trainers and assessors should express a positive attitude towards equal opportunities and act as positive role models.

Mountain Training ensures that wherever possible the design of a qualification ensures there are no disadvantages for people with a protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) compared to learners who do not share that characteristic. However in some circumstances it may be necessary for a reasonable adjustment to be made. Further information on making an application for a reasonable adjustment can be found on the website:

There are also arrangements for special consideration for any learner suffering illness, injury or indisposition. The website includes information on how an application for special consideration may be made.

## **7 Complaints and Appeals Procedure**

The Climbing Wall Leading award is subject to regular monitoring and review. Candidates who have any feedback to give on their courses, both conduct or content, are encouraged to submit written comments to the provider and/or to Mountain Training as a part of that review process.

If for any reason you find it necessary to complain about an aspect of the delivery of your training or assessment then you should contact the course director.

If the dialogue with the course director fails to resolve your concerns then you should contact an officer within the relevant national Mountain Training board.

Candidates are encouraged to decide whether their concerns take the form of a complaint, where some aspect of the course was unsatisfactory but the outcome is uncontested or an appeal, where a candidate believes the assessment result is incorrect and wishes the board to arbitrate.

# Climbing Wall Leading Award Syllabus & Guidance Notes

## 1 TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas and must be able to:

### 1.1 Equipment

- identify and use suitable equipment appropriately for leading routes

### 1.2 Belaying

- Use a variety of belay devices competently and choose the most appropriate one for a given situation
- demonstrate a variety of belay techniques appropriate for lead climbing
- hold leader falls in a controlled manner and carry out lowers

### 1.3 Personal climbing skills

- choose and lead routes at French 6a with confidence
- demonstrate good practice when taking leader falls
- demonstrate an understanding of the safety chain with relevance to lead climbing

## Guidance notes

### Introduction

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the syllabus and are designed to assist in training and assessment by emphasising approaches to, and interpretation of, the syllabus. Candidates, trainers and assessors should read the complete guidance notes and not only the notes specific to them. In this way a fuller understanding of the Climbing Wall Leading Award can be gained.

Climbing Wall Leading Award courses take place at a variety of walls, with their associated hazards, and are therefore for candidates with independent personal experience who have already gained the Climbing Wall Award or Single Pitch Award. Trainers and assessors will endeavour to maintain a safe working environment. Candidates also have a duty to exercise judgement and care regarding personal safety and the safety of others.

The success of any training or assessment course is dependent upon the contribution made by all involved. It is essential that candidates have the required levels of experience and that course staff are active wall users who are up to date with current good practice. There are often several safe and effective approaches to any particular task at a specific wall, and the breadth of experience brought to the course by each person will contribute to the range of learning opportunities.

At the risk of some repetition, specific notes for candidates, trainers and assessors are included. All these notes will provide invaluable insights to assist candidates in progressing through the scheme and beyond.

Throughout this guidance the term 'wall' is used to describe a wide range of purpose-built climbing structures. A fuller description of the range of walls that award holders may work in is described in The Climbing Wall Environment section of the Syllabus.

Mountain Training awards are based on the premise that leaders, supervisors, instructors and coaches require personal experience first, before developing the skills and techniques to work with

others. For this reason, there are minimum requirements for candidates prior to both training and assessment. Candidates should be aware that if they attend a training course without having achieved these requirements they will not be in a position to benefit fully from the techniques and skills presented to them. Attendance on an assessment course without meeting the minimum requirements can lead to automatic deferral or failure.

Candidates should have experience of a range of climbing walls in order to understand both techniques taught at training and tasks they are given at assessment. Candidates should feel free to ask simple questions since they are often the most pertinent, and it is a good idea to make a record of topics and techniques covered at training, to help develop skills afterwards. Candidates should also feel free to ask questions at assessment, as a clear understanding of tasks and contexts is vital to a satisfactory outcome.

The wider the range of personal experience the more the candidate will be able to understand the contents of the course and be able to contribute to discussions. Whilst the training course will cover as much variety as possible, candidates should seek out personal experience at a variety of walls and on outdoor climbs where possible.

As with all Mountain Training awards the Climbing Wall Leading Award is a logbook award. Candidates should view their logbook as a CV of their work, keeping it up to date as they gain experience, both before and after assessment. This allows potential employers to appreciate the range of work undertaken by an award holder and evaluate the currency of their experience. Candidates should also seek further training to support them in their work, where appropriate. The Mountain Training Association administers continuing personal development courses for award holders.

## **1. Technical Competence**

### **1.1 Equipment**

The Climbing Wall Leading Award syllabus is based on the assumption that candidates have experience of lead climbing and belaying at a variety of walls. The emphasis on a training course will be to provide opportunities to share ideas and refine techniques.

Candidates should be aware of the range of equipment suitable for lead climbing. This will include the suitability of different harnesses, the marrying of appropriate belay devices and ropes, and the use of helmets.

As Climbing Wall Award or Single Pitch Award holders, candidates will be familiar with how equipment behaves in static force situations, such as when bottom or top roping. Dynamic forces are created in a rope system when a lead climber falls, and candidates need to understand how climbing equipment behaves in such circumstances.

Candidates need to appreciate that equipment suitable for one student may be inappropriate for another. Hand size, for example, is an important consideration when deciding upon what diameter of rope to use. Such decisions can become more critical when managing dynamic forces within a rope system, when compared to managing only static forces. Furthermore, decisions on rope diameter could impact upon the choice of belay device, with implications for further training, where required.

It should be appreciated that the Climbing Wall Leading Award requires candidates to have knowledge about the use of climbing equipment not covered within either the Climbing Wall or Single Pitch Awards.

The maintenance of fixed safety equipment such as anchor points and extenders is the responsibility of the climbing wall, not of its users. Candidates should be aware of the most common means by which such equipment wears out or can become damaged through extended use, and be capable of basic visual inspection to detect obvious problems.

It would be expected that a Climbing Wall Leading Award holder could offer advice on choice and suitability of equipment, as well as having a reasonable knowledge of its care, maintenance and life expectancy. In addition to being able to offer advice on the selection and use of equipment, candidates should be aware of sources of information, including current publications and materials produced by the Mountaineering Councils and Mountain Training.

## **1.2 Belaying**

Candidates will have belayed a lead climber, but may never have held a leader fall. As this is an essential element of the Climbing Wall Leading Award, candidates will be expected to hold and take leader falls.

Belaying a lead climber involves paying out and taking in the rope during a single lead, combined with an element of anticipating when a lead climber will want either slack or a tight rope. As such, it is a very complex skill to execute and coach. Candidates need to demonstrate a progressive approach to teaching this skill using a variety of techniques.

Belaying methods often reflect the style of climbing. Bottom and top roping involve mainly static forces, and the appropriate belaying is often quite static in nature. A leader fall generates dynamic forces, and the belaying style is sometimes described as dynamic belaying. However, as not all leader falls are the same, using one phrase to describe a desired belaying style can be misleading.

Similarly, candidates need to appreciate that different types of leader fall often require different styles of belaying. For example, it may be both appropriate and desirable for a belayer to dynamically absorb some of the forces created by a fall when the climber is a long way from the ground. But such a style may be highly inappropriate if a leader falls very near the ground.

Candidates need to draw a distinction between different types of leader fall, identify appropriate belaying techniques and then demonstrate ways of teaching these skills.

## **1.3 Personal Climbing Skills**

Candidates should be able to lead at French 6a at training and will be required to lead routes at this grade during assessment.

Teaching lead climbing also requires the teaching of taking leader falls. Climbers are sometimes aware that they are about to fall, but equally, a leader can fall unexpectedly. Candidates need to be confident themselves in taking leader falls, and demonstrate good practice when taking falls and teaching others.

When lead climbing, the safety chain includes elements such as the rope attachment to the climber, the running belays (and top anchor), and the belayer managing the rope. Candidates need to be aware of how variables such as belayer position and equipment choice can compromise the safety chain and identify ways of preventing such situations from occurring.

## **2 THE CLIMBING WALL ENVIRONMENT**

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas and must be able to:

### **2.1 Using climbing walls**

- identify appropriate and inappropriate areas of a wall to teach lead climbing and other associated skills

### **2.2 Etiquette**

- be aware of the hazards presented to other site users by lead climbers and act in a way to keep these minimised
- demonstrate an awareness of the site-specific requirements and agreements relating to teaching leading on different climbing walls and artificial structures

## **Guidance notes**

### **2. The Climbing Wall Environment**

Walls can be temporary or permanent, can be indoors and outdoors, and either occupy dedicated areas or share facilities with other activities.

The ability to identify appropriate and inappropriate areas of a wall where lead climbing and other associated skills can be taught is a key skill to develop within the Climbing Wall Leading Award.

Wall managers have a duty of care to protect members of the public from foreseeable risks, be they climbers or spectators, and this extends to preparing codes of conduct for wall users. It is important for those working on walls to make themselves aware of such codes and to be considerate of other users. Award holders may themselves be instrumental in drawing up such codes for the facilities where they work.

#### **2.1 Using Climbing Walls**

Climbing walls have become justifiably popular climbing venues for both individuals and groups, as they offer a wide variety of climbing opportunities.

At registration, candidates should be competent lead climbers and able to make full use of a wall for their personal climbing. At training, that experience will be developed, and ways in which walls can be used to teach lead climbing in a progressive manner will be covered. At assessment candidates should feel confident to make judgements on the appropriateness of any wall to teach lead climbing skills.

As with other sport facilities, walls are managed environments with user guidelines, some of which may apply to the teaching of lead climbing. The production of specific documentation before commencing their session may be required, for example. Candidates must be aware of common regulations associated with use of walls and know how to access relevant information.

The Climbing Wall Leading Award does not include the skills and techniques of wall management and maintenance. However, where appropriate, candidates should be aware of how to obtain relevant outside expertise to help deal with such issues. Prior to training, candidates will have climbed at a variety of walls and should be aware of commonly used registration systems.

As with all purpose-built sport facilities, those designed for climbing can suffer wear or become damaged. It is rare for a climbing wall to 'fail' structurally in any way, such as a hold breaking off, and

climbing wall users are not responsible for wall maintenance. However, candidates should make themselves familiar with the chain of responsibility for the maintenance of walls they use, and be in a position to report any concerns they may have.

Some walls may be housed in dedicated buildings and others may be located at the end of a sports hall, sharing space with other activities. Candidates should consider how this variety can greatly affect the way in which lead climbing is taught.

Candidates should understand the range of grades used at walls: the French grading system for roped climbs, the V and Font grading system for boulder problems and the less commonly used traditional grading system. Just as when using a wall for personal climbing, the selection of appropriate climbs and bouldering activities is a vital skill when teaching and developing lead climbing skills.

## **2.2 Etiquette**

Those working in climbing walls need to have a sympathetic understanding of the needs of other climbers and groups. Unless specific arrangements have been made, all wall users have an equal right to use the facility, and candidates need to adopt a flexible approach to their work. Candidates should be conscious that inappropriate group-management and instruction could impact upon the enjoyment and safety of other climbers and spectators.

Teaching lead climbing involves the additional likelihood of both climbers and belayers moving quickly and unexpectedly. Party management must reflect this state of affairs.

## **3 SUPERVISION**

Candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas and must be able to:

### **3.1 Planning**

- assess the abilities of individuals to lead routes and belay lead climbers
- plan individual sessions and programmes of activities with appropriate objectives
- understand and introduce progressive coaching activities to ensure development of appropriate knowledge, skills and experience
- have built in flexibility when planning activities in order to respond to changing circumstances
- demonstrate an awareness of responsibility to the wall management, authorising organisations, parents, guardians, group members and other wall users

### **3.2 Managing**

- carry out dynamic risk assessments throughout each lead climbing session
- demonstrate safe and responsible management of students irrespective of whether or not they are directly involved in the climbing activity
- make appropriate judgements regarding the suitability of various techniques for instructing and coaching the skills required for individuals to belay lead climbers and lead climb effectively
- demonstrate an understanding of how to avoid and deal with common lead climbing problems
- manage students effectively by
  - good communication skills
  - setting and reviewing targets.

- Identifying and reacting to the needs of students in relation to the development of lead climbing skills
- supervise climbers belaying and leading
- deliver technical instruction to students including
  - demonstration of effective use of chosen belay device
  - principles of appropriate route choice
  - use of running belays on routes with and without extenders in place
  - communication between leader and belayer
  - falling and holding a fall
  - lowering to the ground
- manage time appropriately in relation to the plan, activity and conditions

### **3.3 Movement skills**

- advise, demonstrate and coach students in climbing movement skills relevant to lead climbing
- demonstrate the use of appropriate climbing and non-climbing activities to develop lead climbing techniques

## **Guidance notes**

### **3. Supervision**

The first two sections of this part of the syllabus can be seen as a continuum of skills required to prepare and supervise a session, and should not just be seen as discrete skills used to complete specific tasks. Planning includes tasks that are completed before meeting with a group and describes the way in which individuals are properly equipped and informed before, during and after a climbing session. Managing encompasses many of the skills and techniques for supervising a climbing session.

When supervising bottom or top roping sessions, a mismatch between climber ability and route grade is often straightforward to deal with. When teaching lead climbing, such mismatches may be more difficult to manage. Candidates need therefore to make sound judgements of both a climber's technical ability and mental preparedness when identifying appropriate routes for them to lead. Such judgements should be seen as underpinning the way in which a session is planned and executed.

Candidates may have little or no experience of teaching leading at training, but by the time they reach assessment will have observed or assisted on at least five teaching of lead climbing sessions.

#### **3.1 Planning**

When planning a session, candidates should consider the implications of factors such as group members' individual experience and expectations, the venue, authorising organisations (where applicable) and other wall users. Walls may be used for a one-off sessions or a long-term programme, and candidates should be aware of possible implications this will have upon the way in which an individual session is planned and executed.

Within any climbing wall there will often be a great range of lead climbing routes varying in difficulty, steepness and length. Planning encompasses consideration of the type of climbing that may be most appropriate for teaching leading. Only by developing a wide range of personal climbing wall experience will candidates be able to plan an effective session for others.

Candidates need to be able to plan sessions that introduce key lead climbing skills in a progressive manner. Some skills can be taught at ground level such as clipping extenders or reading routes. Both can then be developed further in a bottom rope system before a climber leads a route. Candidates need to develop similar methods for introducing other key lead climbing skills progressively.

Leading routes introduces a psychological element that is not present when bottom or top roping, and it can be difficult to predict how individuals will react to such a challenge. Candidates need therefore to be able to change their plans in accordance with the changing circumstances of those they are teaching.

Candidates should also be aware of the different ways in which people learn and, whilst there may well be an emphasis on physical demonstration as a teaching strategy, should be able to incorporate a variety of basic teaching skills into their sessions (written handouts, verbal instruction, physical demonstration, graphic information, questioning, feedback).

### **3.2 Managing**

Candidates need to have a range of group management strategies. Even within the same group there is likely to be a range of personal ability and motivation, and working with each person as an individual can be challenging for even the most experienced.

Clear communication is the basis of good management and effective instruction. Making everyone aware of hazards associated with lead climbing and getting them involved in the management of these risks engenders an atmosphere where all feel actively involved.

Managing group members whilst climbing should be seen as only one element of supervision, as it is the management of those not climbing that is often more complex. This can be especially true at a busy wall with many distractions.

One of the most safety critical skills that Award holders will teach is the belaying of lead climbers. When teaching and managing those belaying lead climbers for the first time, candidates should adopt both a varied and systematic approach. Candidates will need to make judgements about the competencies of others to belay lead climbers effectively.

As Climbing Wall Award or Single Pitch Award holders, candidates will have experience of managing bottom and top roping climbing groups. One important element of such management is the ability to foresee how incidents may arise and plan accordingly.

Working alongside more experienced lead climbing trainers will help candidates appreciate how sessions can be designed to reduce the likelihood of problems occurring. As with personal climbing, this experience should be as varied as possible and gained at a variety of walls.

### **Avoidance and Recognition of Problems**

When lead climbing, there can be less time available to deal with incidents, such as a lead climber z-clipping extenders and being unable to correct the situation. Candidates need therefore to be able to make dynamic risk assessments throughout their sessions, looking to foresee and hopefully prevent problems from arising in the first place, and adopting appropriate courses of actions when problems do arise.

A common lead climbing problem can be difficulty in clipping extenders. Reasons for this include poor body position, nervousness, technical inability and fatigue. Each of which will require a different approach to correct. When dealing with common problems candidates need to be able to identify first the cause and then the appropriate plan of action.

Finally, climbing should be fun! Managing a group effectively should not detract from a group enjoying themselves.

### **3.3 Movement Skills**

Climbing walls are excellent venues for learning and improving on the elements of efficient climbing movement, and Climbing Wall Leading Award holders should be able to improve their students' movement skills if delivering one-off sessions or managing a long-term programme.

Candidates need to have a clear understanding of the concept of 'Centre of Balance' and its relevance to climbing. Candidates should appreciate how different climbing styles affect the position of the body's centre of balance and how that impacts upon the way in which the different muscle groups within the body are used.

Knowledge of the principles of efficient climbing movement should not be new to candidates, as this is a key part of the Climbing Wall Award syllabus. Instead, candidates need to be aware of issues which are maybe more relevant to lead climbing.

For example, even though not strictly a movement skill, lead climbing requires the adoption of a stable position (where possible) each time an extender is clipped.

When coaching key skills such as these, candidates need to demonstrate knowledge of appropriate climbing and non-climbing activities, alongside the ability to use roped and non-roped areas of a climbing wall.

Smooth and fluid movement when bouldering or bottom roping can be transformed to stiff and jerky movements when leading a route. Such radical changes in style can often be due to nerves. Candidates are not expected to be 'psychological coaches' but should be able to identify activities to help a novice lead climber transfer their movement skills to lead climbing situations.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Using the Digital Logbook**

Mountain Training highly recommends that all candidates use the on-line digital logbook (DLOG) facility in the Candidate Management System to record their developing experience. If you choose to use an alternative method, for example spreadsheet or 'paper' logbook, then the entries should follow a similar format (headings, etc.) as those contained in DLOG. Entries should be concise and easy to read.

The logbook should provide a total record of your experiences and demonstrate, at assessment, that the Board's requirements have been fulfilled. It is an essential tool that can help trainers advise candidates on specific further experience needed before assessment and can also be used by employers after assessment to demonstrate continuing experience.

A key facet of all the Mountain Training Awards is that competence is fundamentally based on extensive quality personal experience of the activity. Having relevant and extensive personal experience is key to success at assessment.

### **Appendix 2**

#### **Further Experience**

Award holders should follow the National Guidelines issued by Mountain Training UK. In particular, they should note that their award is only valid where the holder is operating within the scope of the award and the holder has recent logged experience appropriate to the award.

Where there is any doubt advisers should contact the relevant national Mountain Training board.

According to the Health and Safety Executive there are four ways to demonstrate the competence of leaders. These are:

- to hold the relevant qualification
- to hold an equivalent qualification
- to have received appropriate in-house training
- to be competent through experience

Mountain Training endorses this view, while emphasising that national awards are the key components in such an approach. Further training events and opportunities to review new initiatives are valuable components in the continuing development of any leader.

To assist in providing further training opportunities the Mountain Training Association will make available information on matters of interest to all award holders including Continuing Personal Development (CPD) events.

The responsibility for ensuring that leaders receive refresher training must lie with the provider of the service, or the individual in the case of self-employed leaders. Award holders who wish to operate beyond the scope of their award(s) by virtue of their additional experience and/or training, for example a Lowland Leader award holder leading a party in local moorland terrain which they are familiar with, may be enabled to do so either through in-house training and/or within the context of a local scheme.

Local schemes are for the provision of skills needed to deal with specific restricted tasks, and the accreditation tends to be site or area specific, restricted and non-transferable. Therefore, it should be appreciated that local schemes are only suitable for use by organisations and not by individuals. Individuals (self-employed leaders) seeking additional training and assessment from a suitably qualified and experienced technical advisor, thus enabling them to develop further relevant experience, may find this allows them to demonstrate competence beyond the scope of the award. Award holders using this route to extend their personal remit should clarify the operational responsibility of the technical advisor and the implications for their insurance cover for operating beyond the scope of the award held

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Sample course programmes**

Sample Programmes and Course Notes for all Mountain Training awards can be viewed and downloaded here <http://www.mountain-training.org/sample-course-programs-and-course-notes>

### **Appendix 4**

#### **Post-assessment support**

Becoming a member of the Mountain Training Association is a recommended way of obtaining further relevant training and keeping up to date with developments within the Climbing Wall Leading Award, as well as other Mountain Training schemes. Mountain Training Association also provides networking and social events, for members to keep in touch and up to date. Membership is open to anyone who is registered for any of the national awards. For more information about Mountain Training Association including benefits of membership <http://www.mountain-training.org/associations/mountain-training-association>

### **Appendix 5**

#### **Ratios**

1:4 on training courses, maximum course size 8, minimum 2. Additional staff must hold Climbing Wall Leading Award or a higher award and have appropriate experience/knowledge of teaching leading.

1:4 on assessment courses, maximum course size 8, minimum 2. Additional staff must hold Mountaineering Instructor Award or a higher award.